

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS)
Financial And Reports Management System (FARMS) Project
Implementation Paper
Presented 7/12/6

Project Sponsor: Kenneth Tow

Project Points of Contract:

- Ken Tow - 281-6153
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Goal:

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship's (IDALS) Financial And Reports Management System (FARMS) application will be implemented to be a departmental-level system to help manage all of the various funds and grant programs that the department provides. It will also allow more effective communications between landowners, SWCD offices, IDALS employees, Department of Revenue employees and Finances I/3 system.

The goals for this project are to:

1. Educate landowners about the various funding programs available to help landowners improve their land management through the sharing of information and provide funding for the appropriate programs.
2. Simplify and speed up the application process.
3. Reduce the time it takes to reimburse landowners after they have completed their projects.
4. Allow landowners to easily check the status of any practices they have enrolled in IDALS programs. IDALS programs map cleanly to funding sources and the funds are allocated to a set of allowable practices. So, for example, a landowner would be able to check the status of a claim for a terrace (i.e. practice) which is part of the watershed protection program.
5. Allow the IDALS central office to do real-time reporting and management of their funds. This will also allow the central office to check the status of the funds that were allocated to each of the 99 districts.
6. Streamline processes for district workers.
7. Provide a centralized database that will allow IDALS to answer legislative questions about the use and acceptance of their programs.

Project Purpose:

The purpose of the project is to establish a web based system that will be used by landowners, SWCD offices and IDALS. The system will replace the current process, which is entirely paper-based, with an Internet-based system. The new system will guide and assist landowners throughout the process, starting with submitting their application for assistance through to actually getting their reimbursement check as well as allowing landowners, SWCD offices and IDALS employees to communicate effectively with each other.

IDALS Funds Management System

Background:

It is the intent of the FARMS application, a web based system, to drastically reduce the amount of paper being used and eliminate the need for SWCD offices to report program information to IDALS.

SWCD offices and IDALS employees currently are conducting business with customers primarily with paper documents. It's frequently necessary to have three copies of every piece of paper generated (landowner, SWCD, IDALS). Also, although some ledgers are kept in MS Excel, many SWCD offices are still using hand written, hand calculated ledgers.

At this time, paper reports are generated quarterly and are not accessible by the public in an electronic format. It requires numerous hours of time to accumulate program allocations, expenditures and environmental benefits for each program. Lack of readily available information inhibits government accountability and does not encourage a participatory democracy.

By implementing this application, it will provide a large number of benefits not only to the landowners, but also to IDALS districts and the central office.

Request:

The request is for \$295,000.00 to cover the Implementation Phase as well as first year hosting charges broken out as follows:

Implementation/Testing - \$290,000.00
First Year Hosting - \$ 5,000.00

Cost Avoidance:

The cost of implementing the FARMS application will:

1. reduce time spent by staff to track the applications
2. reduce system time spent to submit and collect reimbursements
3. Improve tracking thereby allowing funds to be committed more quickly and efficiently.

Interested Parties:

Citizens of the State of Iowa
Landowners
Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
Department of Revenue
Finances I/3

Some of the Recipients of this Service:

See above Interested Parties